

# **Greenville Police Department Area Policing Plan**

**by**

**Lieutenants Ted D. Sauls, David C. Ivey, Edward D. Carson and Herald D. Hines**

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Beginning in November of 2007 the Greenville Police Department began structuring a plan designed to provide the citizens of Greenville with a well regulated response plan. This plan became known as the Area Policing Plan and was implemented in the Fall of 2007. The overall goal of this plan is to improve accountability and expand upon the Violent Crime Response Plan, a plan previously implemented to combat violent criminal activity.

The objective of this plan is to develop and implement a comprehensive department-wide approach to policing the City of Greenville. Every section of the Police Department is affected to ensure accountability at all levels.

## **The Greenville Police Department**

The Greenville Police Department is a law enforcement agency with a jurisdiction consisting of over 75,000 residents. The community includes approximately 30,000 university students and staff. The challenges presented to the officers and staff of the department varies greatly depending upon the geographical region of the city. Policing a population of over 75,000 individuals places the Greenville Police Department in the top five percent (5%) of law enforcement agencies in the United States.

The progressive nature of the City of Greenville necessitates a progressive law enforcement agency. The Greenville Police Department is just such an agency. With 180 sworn officers and 40 non-sworn employees, the department serves the citizens of Greenville on many different levels. The main components of the department include the Chief's Office, The Patrol Bureau, the Investigations Bureau and the Administration Bureau.

The various bureaus within the Greenville Police Department work in unison to ensure that all facets of the Area Policing Plan are taken into account. This is accomplished by the assignment of a representative from each bureau to the various areas established by this plan.

The Patrol Bureau consists of four rotating platoons of officers who are currently assigned to fourteen patrol districts. The patrol shifts covered by the platoons are twelve hour shifts with an overlap at the beginning and end of each shift. These officers are tasked with providing service to the citizens of Greenville twenty-four hours a day seven days a week. The primary focus of these officers is preventive patrol, apprehension of offenders, preliminary investigation of crimes and motor vehicle accidents, and response to citizen calls for service.

The officers working the fourteen various districts within the City of Greenville

are the primary component of the Area Policing Plan. These officers are the “first responders” for the department and therefore serve as the main contact for citizens regarding problems/concerns and community issues. Patrol Special Operations is a division of the department formed to meet the ever evolving demands of law enforcement in the twenty-first century. Patrol Special Operations consists of the IMPACT Unit (Increased Mobilization of Police and Communities Together), the Housing Authority Unit, Warrant Service Unit and the Traffic Safety Unit. Together, each of these units provide a specialized approach to problem solving in the community.

Through the use of the SARA model of Community Policing all facets of the Police Department are able to provide lasting results in a community. The SARA model consists of “Scanning, Analysis, Response and Assessment” of problems in a community; both real and perceived. This approach provides a thorough examination of a particular problem as well as community empowerment regarding future issues of concern.

An important phase in the implementation of this plan has been education. Officers are encouraged to attend as many scheduled community events as possible in an effort to educate citizens about the Area Policing Plan. While providing this education, officers too find that they learn a great deal more by being immersed in the community. These contacts prove to be priceless when considering true mutual working relationships between communities and the Police.

Within the Patrol Bureau structure are four Lieutenants that serve as Shift Commanders and one Lieutenant that serves as commander for the Patrol Special Operations Division. These commanders are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Patrol Bureau and a geographic portion of the city. The geographic region is approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the cities mass and houses three to four patrol districts.

By dividing the city into equal areas the Shift Commanders can focus attention on the specific problems of that area. This allows for a better picture into the specific problems, types of crimes and quality of life issues occurring in the neighborhoods that comprise the area. This type of system also allows a member of a neighborhood direct access to a command level officer of the Greenville Police Department. In turn, the Shift Commanders are better able to keep a finger on the pulse of their specific area and address concerns, both old and new, as they are presented.

To allow for better identification of the various areas the city has been broken into four areas described as A, B, C, and D. This also aids in the identification of the command personnel who are responsible for the specific area. In the near future a map will be made available on the City of Greenville website ([www.greenvillenc.gov](http://www.greenvillenc.gov)) that will detail what districts are in what geographical

area as well as what Shift Commander to contact should need arise.

All other facets of the Greenville Police Department participate in the Area Policing Plan. Each division/unit provides the Area Commanders with assistance as their position allows. All four Area Commanders are assisted by a Detective Sergeant from the Investigations Bureau. This person allows for a timely transfer of information between the Patrol Bureau and the Investigations Bureau. Members of the I.M.P.A.C.T. and Gang Units as well as the Traffic Safety Unit also assist the Area Commanders in developing strategies and determining approaches to managing and eliminating criminal activity in their areas.

No area of the Police Department is without purpose in the Area Policing Plan. All members of the department, sworn and non-sworn, are encouraged to participate in weekly meetings. Each unit/division is able to provide information that others either did not have or did not have access to. The transfer of information between units/divisions is unprecedented. Officers acknowledge that they are more informed now than ever before. The transfer of this information has provided district officers within the specific areas the tools necessary to coordinate efforts in decreasing/eliminating criminal activity.

## **Area Policing Philosophy**

The philosophy of area policing grew from the development of the Greenville Police Department's Violent Crime Response Plan. This plan was first implemented in November of 2006. The initial plan called for increased patrol in identified corridors as well as aggressive investigation and documentation of suspicious and confirmed criminal activity. This plan was configured to meet the needs of the City of Greenville; nevertheless, an updated version was implemented in October 2007. The Violent Crime Response Plan was designed to allow for proactive patrol of identified focus areas. These focus areas were derived with the input from officers of all levels and rank. These areas are perceived as the "hot-spot" locations within a patrol district. The goal of this program is to focus as much effort on the criminal activity in an identified hot-spot as possible with existing resources. The goal of the Violent Crime Response Plan is not unlike that of the Area Policing Plan. Due to the similarities of the two many of the strategies overlap.

With infrastructure already in place the leap to a full area policing plan was not overly difficult. In general, the entire department redirected their activities to address the identified hot-spots in each of the four geographical areas. It was initially necessary to determine what patrol districts would be included in what area. Once these boundaries were established each Shift Commander determined the officers that worked the districts in their area. A monthly meeting was established so that each Shift Commander would have face-to-face access to all of the officers in their area. Included in these meetings would be representatives

from all facets of the department.

Through the use of the Greenville Police Department's Community Policing Plan, Area Commanders were able to focus the activities of officers in each district in a tailor-made approach to ensure the most effective and efficient response to the problems in the area. Officers are instructed to address criminal activity, quality of life issues, activity in violation of city ordinance and issues presented by members of the various communities they patrol. Professionalism has been maintained throughout the initial stages of plan implementation and will remain a core concept for the officers of the Greenville Police Department. Chief Anderson instills in the officers of the Greenville Police Department that there will be no sanctuary given to criminals and criminal activity, especially in identified hot-spots.

The philosophies of policing in designated areas extends beyond the Police response. The community also plays a very important role in the success or failure of a plan such as the Area Policing Plan. As officers extend a personal relationship to the citizens living in the areas they police, the citizens must also strive to ensure that they get to know the officers who patrol the area in which they live. Through the use of these officers, and the development of meaningful relationships, citizens can resolve problems by using officers they are familiar with and who are familiar with the issues of the community. The overall goal being that the same officer deals with the same district/area at all times. This will ensure that officers become savvy to the good and bad element within their area. When officers become aware of the patterns of criminal activity in their assigned area they are better able to relay information to the Shift/Area Commanders. This ensures that the crime response plans for each area is constantly updated to address the current concerns of the community.

Officers are encouraged to attend community watch and homeowner association meetings to further determine the needs, and perceived problems, of all neighborhoods in their area. Members of the Crime Prevention Unit conduct community presentations, participate in cookouts and provide line-officers with schedules that allow attendance at various neighborhood functions. This activity leads to an educated community with neighborhoods that are capable of target hardening their assets to reduce possible victimization. This involvement solidifies to the members of these communities that the Greenville Police Department has a sincere interest in removal of bad elements and reduction in crime.

In addition to sworn law enforcement presence the Greenville Police Department has partnered with other entities to ensure the most comprehensive response possible. Through communication with other City of Greenville departments such as Public Works, police officers are able to address quality of life issues that exceed routine police response. Officers constantly coordinate efforts with GNAT (Greenville Nuisance Abatement Team), Code Enforcement, legal staff

and utilities personnel. These combined efforts ensure that all aspects of a problem are addressed versus the use of a band-aid response that is simply a temporary fix.

## Implementation

In January 2007, the Area Policing Plan was implemented with the following structure:

Area A:	Districts 1, 2, 3, and 8	Lt. Sauls
Area B:	Districts 4, 5 and 11	Lt. Carson
Area C:	Districts 6, 7, 12 and 13	Lt. Ivey
Area D:	Districts 9, 10, and 14	Lt. Hines

This structure ensures that each area has a Lieutenant who is directly responsible for the geographic portion of the city in which they are assigned. Each Lieutenant is responsible for the day to day management of a specific patrol platoon as well as an assigned area. This requires the Platoon/Area Commanders to use problem solving techniques throughout the city to combat criminal activity. If a Lieutenant that is not on duty implements action in their assigned area then each of the other Lieutenants are obligated to ensure that action is carried out even when they are off. This system allows for continuous implementation of the problem solving strategies developed by the various Shift/Area Commanders, even in their absence.

The previous development of the Violent Crime Response Plan provided a foundation that allowed for easy transition into Area Policing. This same structure is used on a daily basis by all supervisory personnel to attack issues that arise. Through the use of this plan, coupled with the philosophies of Area Policing, supervisors are able to disseminate information in a timely manner with specific goals, objectives and direction. Likewise, officers are better able to focus their efforts by simply staying abreast of the various Area Crime Response Plans. Through reporting requirements all Area Commanders are better informed, better able to relay information to members of the public and better armed to deal with the problems of the community as well as the criminal element.

One of the essential aspects of the Area Policing Plan is flexibility. During implementation it was stressed to all members, both sworn and non-sworn, of the Greenville Police Department that the intent of this plan is that it be ever-evolving. This flexibility allows for constant, expected change and has allowed the Area Policing Plan to grow as the needs of the City of Greenville grow. One such example would be the transition from twelve to fourteen patrol districts in July 2008.

Likewise, the various components of the Area Policing Plan, such as the use of the Violent Crime Response Plan, are also flexible. These plans provide the

outline with Area Commanders having the authority to alter their content to manage a current issue. As the needs of the city change so do the plans designed to manage those needs. An example would be the response to a rash of armed robberies with a geographical commonality. In this example, the Violent Crime Response Plan is used to ensure that all officers are enforcing violations consistently. The Area Commander is able to monitor progress, compile statistics and report regularly to the affected officers regarding status of the crimes in question.

## **Program Evaluation**

Area Policing as a concept can be evaluated on many levels. Those most affected by the plan are the citizens in each geographical area. The opinions, as well as positive and negative comments, from these citizens will be the greatest measure of progress and success of this program. Citizens, as well as officers, will be given the opportunity to comment openly and on a continual basis regarding the Area Policing Plan.

Secondly, the Crime Analyst for the Greenville Police Department will extrapolate information relevant to the plan. This information will include crime trends, hot spot areas and raw numbers based on the Uniform Crime Report. These numbers will be evaluated statistically to determine percentages of increase and/or decrease in violent criminal activity. This gauge will greatly impact the perception of the general public as the issues that cause the most discussion might prove to be quality of life issues versus violent criminal activity. If this is in fact the case then the Area Policing Plan will remain flexible to address these concerns as well.

Lastly, the Area Policing Plan will be evaluated by weekly contact with all Area Commanders. These commanders will be held strictly accountable for the geographical areas they are assigned. In turn, the officers assigned to the districts in these areas will also be held accountable for the day-to-day activity in their specific district. This will ensure that all officers, at all levels, understand the need to become familiar with their district and develop an attitude of ownership within the areas they are assigned to work.

## **Conclusion**

The Greenville Police Department's Area Policing Plan is a culmination of strategies, ideologies and proven techniques that provide the officers of the Greenville Police Department the necessary tools to combat criminal activity. Likewise, the citizens residing in the various geographical areas within the city

limits of Greenville now have personal contact with police officers who they become familiar and comfortable with. This aspect of the Area Policing Plan is consistent with Community Policing Initiatives from across the United States. These techniques develop strong community/police bonds that allow for better working relationships, increased quality of life and decreased criminal activity.

Through programs like the Area Policing Plan, the Greenville Police Department will remain a cutting-edge law enforcement agency with the ability to address the ever changing community that is the City of Greenville.